



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

Dear *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month* Participant:

Ensuring every American's access to addiction treatment programs is one of my goals as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This access is necessary to enrich the lives and improve the health of those who face substance abuse disorders every day. As an integral part of the 17<sup>th</sup> annual *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* this September, your organization plays an important role in a large effort to improve the well-being of every American.

Many of our citizens have had encouraging experiences in treatment and recovery. As the voices of people who are in recovery begin to work together, they personify this year's *Recovery Month* theme: "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Build a Stronger, Healthier Community.*" By demonstrating the impact just one person in treatment can have on the community, we can work toward a healthier society.

To accomplish these goals, it is important to keep in mind that societal stigma still casts a negative shadow on people with substance abuse disorders. As more and more people seek treatment and gain recovery, we can continue to acknowledge the positive influence that recovery can have on our community. By educating fellow community members that substance abuse disorders should be treated, as any other chronic illness, we can begin to eradicate the stigma that is placed on those with addictions and people in recovery.

The success of previous *Recovery Month* campaigns is proof that ongoing recovery from substance abuse disorders can be accomplished. I thank you for your organization's efforts to make this year's *Recovery Month* the best ever, and for helping share the message that recovery can build a stronger and healthier community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael O. Leavitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being the most prominent.

Michael O. Leavitt